

# San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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**TO:** Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: 3000-3500 Marina Boulevard Office Development; First Pre-Application Review**  
(For Design Review Board consideration on September 17, 2018)

## Project Summary

**Project Proponents & Property Owners.** Phase 3 Real Estate Partners, Inc. ("P3") and Sierra Point LLC (Owner).

**Project Representatives.** Neil Fox and Michael Gerrity (P3, Developer); Steven Sobel, Michael Duncan, Hardik Udani, and Alessandro Rosso (SOM, Architect); Thomas Morse and Lane Kurkjian (BFK Engineers, Civil Engineers); Tom Leader (TLS Landscape Architecture, Landscape Architect); and Ellen Johnck (Consultant).

**Project Site.** The 8.87-acre project site is located at 3000-3500 Marina Boulevard on the Sierra Point Peninsula, in the City of Brisbane, San Mateo County. To the west, the site is bounded by a drainage slough, the lower reaches of which consist of a small tidally-influenced salt marsh, and the U.S. Highway 101 northbound on-ramp and travel lanes. To the north of the site is the San Francisco Bay, the Bay Trail, and an adjacent area owned by the California State Lands Commission. The Commission's San Francisco Bay Plan ("Bay Plan") identifies this adjacent area, part of the Brisbane Causeway, as a Waterfront Park, Beach Priority Use Area. Office buildings and a parking lot are located to the east of the site, at 5000 and 7000 Marina Boulevard; the permit associated with these buildings (BCDC Permit No. M1985.020.01) designates two view corridors, including one at the eastern edge of the proposed project site, and requires at least 5 full-time dedicated public access parking spaces and 39 after-hours public access parking spaces at 5000 and 7000 Marina Boulevard (Exhibit 10). Marina Boulevard is located to the southeast of the project site, and an office building is located to the south at 1000 Marina Boulevard, outside of BCDC's jurisdiction.

Land uses on the Sierra Point Peninsula near the project site include mid-rise office towers (3- to 12-stories in height) with surface parking and parking structures, two hotels located at the southwestern portion of the peninsula, and recreational uses including the Brisbane Marina, Sierra Point Yacht Club, and a portion of the San Francisco Bay Trail. The project site is locally accessible from Marina Boulevard and regionally accessible from US 101. A public shuttle bus service from the Balboa Park BART station and the South San Francisco Caltrain Station serves Sierra Point, and other bus service routes run nearby.

**Existing Conditions.** The project site is currently not developed and contains two stockpile dirt mounds. The site generally slopes towards the San Francisco Bay, from approximately +21.3' NAVD88 to approximately +8.3' NAVD88. The project site is located on a former, closed landfill, and is therefore underlain with approximately 75 to 100 feet of fill, refuse, soft clay (Bay mud) and hard clay. A clay cap over the refuse layer is located along the northern and eastern portions of the site. Proposed activities, including excavation, grading, construction, and operations related to the proposed project, are subject to requirements for post-closure land use of former landfills and are regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board, California Integrated Waste Management Board, and San Mateo County Environmental Health Services Division Solid Waste Program.

**Site Development History.** On August 11, 2008, the DRB reviewed a design for the development of two office buildings and a parking garage at the project site, which was entitled by the City of Brisbane in 2009 but did not pursue a BCDC permit and was not constructed. As part of their comments on the originally-entitled project, the DRB noted the importance of the view corridor and suggested it be strengthened through the project design, and also recommended that the Clapper rail fence be located down slope to maintain views. The site has since been transferred to a different developer, Phase 3, which now presents a modified site and building design.

**Proposed Project.** The proposed project would include the construction of a life-sciences/R&D campus with three office buildings (totaling 422,522 square feet) constructed above a two-story podium parking garage. The buildings would be primarily used for lab/R&D space, but would also contain commercial, restaurant, and open spaces above the podium and a fitness center at podium-level facing the shoreline public access. Surface parking, outdoor recreational and lawn areas, a segment of the Bay Trail, and public access amenities would also be provided at grade. The life-science campus is anticipated to serve approximately 800-1,200 employees from several companies. The project would require substantial grading work to remove the two mounds of soil and underlying refuse layer on the site. Within the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction, the proposed project includes the following components:

1. **Bay Trail Extension (Exhibits 3, 10-15, 17-19, 22-24).** The proposed project would improve the existing Bay Trail along the northern edge of the site and extend the Bay Trail down along the western edge of the site along the slough, creating a 12-foot-wide accessible, asphalt bicycle and pedestrian path with 3-foot-wide decomposed granite shoulders. The public would be able to access the Bay Trail via a sidewalk along the southern edge of the site, from the driveway adjacent to the access path at 5000-7000 Marina Boulevard on the eastern edge of the site, or from the building's podium-level open space. As part of this project, the project representatives have also proposed to extend the Bay Trail along the western edge of the property to the south at 1000 Marina Boulevard, which they also own. The extension would complete the Bay Trail loop around Sierra Point. Lighting, wayfinding and interpretive signage would be incorporated in the final project design for the Bay Trail and other public access areas.
2. **North Lawn Area and Fire Lane (Exhibits 11-15, 17-18, 22-24).** The northern waterfront edge of the property will include an approximately 42,160-square-foot public access area. This public access would include approximately 14,834 square feet of lawn areas, with outdoor fitness equipment available to the public. The northern lawn areas would also include outdoor public seating (approximately six benches), and 12 public bike racks (24

bike capacity). The grade-level public access would be connected to podium level open space and retail amenities with a terraced stair and accessible ramp. Additional planting and bioretention areas would be located on either side of a proposed grass-paver fire service access route. The 26-foot-wide concrete fire lane would extend from the driveway on the east side of the project, wrap around the north side and connect to the surface parking lot on the west side of the project. Vehicular access would be restricted on the fire lane along the northern edge of the project site where it crosses the proposed public access area (removable bollards may be installed with approval from the Fire Department) and the fire lane would consist of grass pavers at this location. On the east side of the project, the fire lane would run adjacent to the neighboring property's public access pathway and view corridor.

3. **Habitat Fence or Fence Alternative.** The project would include a fence or fence alternative, such as planting, along the western edge of the site and part of the northern edge of the property, next to and bayward of the proposed Bay Trail, for the purpose of protecting wildlife.<sup>1</sup> The fence is not shown in the exhibits, but would be located westward of the Bay Trail.

Within and outside of the Commission's jurisdiction, the project includes the following components:

1. **Surface Parking, Plantings, and Bay Trail Access (Exhibits 11-13, 16-19, 21-24).** A total of 127 surface parking spaces would be provided along the western and southern sides of the project site (110 parking spaces within the shoreline band, 17 outside of BCDC's jurisdiction). Eight of the spaces would be dedicated for public use including one ADA parking space. Trees would be planted within the parking area and at the northwest corner of the site in the shoreline band between the parking lot and the public access area. A 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalk would lead from Marina Boulevard to the Bay Trail along the southern edge of the property. Two driveways would connect to Marina Boulevard on the southeastern side of the project site; the northernmost would include a drive aisle along the eastern side of the site that leads to the parking garage entrance and connects with the fire lane at the northern edge.

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<sup>1</sup> A 2008 Initial Study for an office park development at the project site that was ultimately not pursued identified the sighting of two California Ridgeway's Rails (formerly Clapper Rails) approximately 60 to 80 feet northwest of the project site. The Initial Study required mitigation as part of that project to protect disturbance of the habitat, primarily to limit intrusion of dogs and humans into the potential habitat area. This mitigation effort included installation of construction fencing and a permanent fence along the western and northern edge of the property. The project proponent is reviewing mitigation options with the City of Brisbane for the current project proposal. A new Initial Study is being prepared for the proposed project and will provide updated information on potential environmental impacts related to Ridgeway's Rails, which will inform mitigation needs and options.

Outside of the Commission’s jurisdiction, the project includes the following components:

1. **Life Science Office Buildings (Exhibits 9-11, 13-15, 20-24).** Three life science office buildings would be constructed above a two-story parking garage. The three buildings, totaling 422,522 square feet, would range from 6 to 7 stories above the parking garage and would be situated around a “U”-shaped podium open space that faces north toward the Bay. All three buildings would include office/lab space and a lobby. In addition, one building would include board and training rooms, and another would include event space and a restaurant.
2. **Parking Garage and Podium Public Open Space (Exhibits 11-14, 21-24).** A two-story, approximately 257,677-square-foot podium parking garage would provide the foundation for the three office buildings, with 654 interior parking spaces. On top of the podium, a central 87,000-square-foot elevated open space area would be available for public use. This open space area would include an approximately 22,640-square-foot lawn and an approximately 1,500-square-foot café. On the northern edge of the podium, a wide set of stairs and ADA-accessible ramp would lead down to the north lawn areas and Bay Trail. A 12,075-square-foot membership-based fitness center would be located under the north side of the podium, accessed next to the ramp. A set of stairs on the southeast would also connect the podium to Marina Boulevard, providing access to the elevated open space area from the street. The podium area would include trees, bioretention areas, green walls, and other plantings. Restrooms would be located on the podium level in the three buildings (shared with building tenants) and would be made available for public use upon request with building security.

**Resilience and Adaptation to Rising Sea Level.** According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) the current 100-year-flood elevation for the project site is approximately +10’ NAVD88, and current MHHW is +6.7’ NAVD88. The proposed improvements, which are bounded by the Bay Trail extension and improvements, are at a minimum elevation of +12.9’ NAVD88. The design life of the project is approximately 50 years. For planning purposes, the project proponents have used a range of 3.1 to 3.5 feet of sea level rise by 2070 (MHHW = 9.8’-10.2’ NAVD88, BFE=13.1’- 13.5’ NAVD88), based on the low- and high-emission scenarios for medium-high risk aversion presented in the updated State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance document.

Under the projections in the Guidance document for medium-high risk aversion projects in a high-emissions scenario, the proposed project would not flood by 2050 projections (BFE+1.9’SLR = +11.9’ NAVD88). By 2070, the project site would not be inundated daily, but some of the lower-lying areas along the edges of the site (e.g., Bay Trail at +12.9’ NAVD88) could be overtopped by a 50-year storm. The low-lying trail areas could be raised as needed to address flooding (Exhibit 18.)

**Operations and Maintenance.** Maintenance of the public access would be included in Phase 3’s annual maintenance budget.

**Project Approvals and Proposed Timeline.** The proposed project has not yet received regulatory approvals. The site was previously entitled by the City of Brisbane with a different project design. The City of Brisbane is preparing an Initial Study and Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration for the new project design under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), to be published for public comment later this year. The proposed construction timeline is from August 2019 through 2022, pending regulatory approvals.

### Commission Findings, Policies & Guidelines

**San Francisco Bay Plan Policies.** The Bay Plan maps identify shoreline priority use areas and geographic-specific policies for certain areas along the shoreline. While the project site itself is not designated as a priority use area, **Bay Plan Map No. 5** designates the adjacent property to the north of the site, part of the Brisbane Causeway, as a Waterfront Park, Beach Priority Use Area.

The Bay Plan **Public Access** policies state, in part, that “...maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline...” and that “[a]ccess to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available.” Further, these policies state that “... improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline, should permit barrier free access for persons with disabilities to the maximum feasible extent, should include an ongoing maintenance program, and should be identified with appropriate signs.” Additionally, the policies provide that “[p]ublic access should be sited, designed, managed, and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding,” and that access should be designed consistent with the physical and natural environment.

The proposed project would improve existing Bay Trail and extend the Bay Trail—which currently terminates along the shoreline at the subject site—to Marina Boulevard (Exhibit 3). The project would also include the development of public lawns to the north of the proposed podium, and an elevated open space with lawn and café on top of the podium. Stairs and an accessible ramp would connect the podium with the shoreline public access areas. Site furnishings including benches, bike racks, lighting, and signage are also proposed.

Bay Plan Public Access policies consider the potential for conflicts between public access and wildlife habitat, stating, in part, that: “Public access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife.... Siting, design and management strategies should be employed to avoid or minimize adverse effects on wildlife, informed by the advisory principles in the Public Access Design Guidelines. If significant adverse effects cannot be avoided or reduced to a level below significance through siting, design and management strategies, then in lieu public access should be provided... Where appropriate, effects of public access on wildlife should be monitored over time to determine whether revisions of management strategies are needed.” These policies also state that “Public access to some natural areas should be provided to permit study and enjoyment of these areas. ...projects in such areas should be carefully evaluated in consultation with appropriate agencies to determine the appropriate location and type of access to be provided,” and that “[d]iverse and interesting public access experiences should be provided which would encourage users to remain in the designated access areas to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat.”

The Bay Plan **Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views** policies state, in part, that “all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay” and that “[m]aximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas...” Furthermore, “[s]tructures and facilities that do not take advantage or complement the Bay should be located and designed so as not to impact visually on the and shoreline. In particular, parking areas should be located away from the shoreline.”

The Commission’s **Public Access Design Guidelines** state partly that public access should be designed “so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user’s appreciation diminished by large nearby building masses....” Furthermore, “public access improvements should be designed for a wide range of users,” should “provide basic public amenities, such as trails, benches, play opportunities, trash containers, drinking fountains, lighting and restrooms that are designed for different ages, interests and physical abilities,” and should be designed for the weather of the site. The guidelines also state that viewing the Bay is the “most widely enjoyed ‘use’ and projects should be designed to “enhance and dramatize views of the Bay.”

### Board Questions

**The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the design of the proposed public access:**

1. Would the proposed design for the public access areas (including the shoreline and podium-elevated areas) encourage diverse, Bay-related activities for a wide variety of users, and create a “sense of place,” which would be unique and enjoyable?
2. Are the public access areas designed in a manner that “feels public” and makes the shoreline enjoyable to the greatest number of people?
3. There are several informal access points from the project site to the Waterfront Park Priority Use Area to the north. If the additional CEQA study reveals the potential for conflicts between public access uses and adjacent wildlife habitat, does the Board have any thoughts on siting, design, and management strategies to avoid or minimize adverse effects on wildlife?

**The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the design of the proposed physical and visual connections:**

4. Are the connections between the various public areas (Bay Trail, public lawns, elevated open space, etc.) designed appropriately to connect people to and along the shoreline?
5. Does the design of the stairs and ramp on the north side of the podium and the stairs on the southeastern side of the podium create a public invitation to use the elevated public open space?
6. A view corridor and public access pathway on the adjacent property align with the eastern edge of this property. Are there opportunities to reduce conflicts between vehicle and public access use of the drive aisle and emergency vehicle lane, and to create a sense of public invitation to the shoreline for pedestrians and bicyclists?
7. Is the proposed public shore parking sited in an appropriate location?

**The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding sea level rise:**

8. Are the public areas appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise?